SCAFFOLDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR IMMIGRANTS

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Abstract:

English Language is an official foreign language used by Indians. Many Indian youth have a craze to migrate to foreign countries for stay, work or pursue higher studies.   Generally English language learners opt for internationally acclaimed language proficiency tests like The International English Language Testing System (IELTS), The Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL), Occupational English Test (OET), Pearson Test of English (PTE), etc. As a result they end up taking intensive training; to get higher bands/ points.

Scaffolding an appropriate English language instruction for such immigrants becomes a challenging task by the trainers to overcome learners' language nuances in four basic skills that are Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Moreover the outdated school teaching pattern has added to the agony of learners' wherein they didn't have the grasp of language skills.

Communicative Language Teaching via Constructivism is greatly emphasized for such learners' opting for language proficiency tests. Six basic scaffolding strategies are used: Modelling, Bridging, Contextualizing, Schema Building, Text Representation, and Developing Metacognition.

In this Case Study; the author discusses the problems faced by the language learners' in attaining the required proficiency and chalks out an English language instruction strategy suitable to immigrants.

Key Words: Scaffolding,   English   Language   Instruction,   Communicative   Language   Teaching, Immigrants.

Introduction:

During the pre-independence era; English was the main language in all official and unofficial facets. Post-independence, Hindi was used as a substitute but it has not attained the status of what English has attained to connect India with the world. Though, Hindi is still used as a national language at the centre. There are certain reasons for the continuance of English in India:

1. English is used as a language to link with the world knowledge and is imperative to gain access to modern scientific and technological knowledge.
2. Even today; Hindi, as a substitute for English as a language has yet to attain the status of an all-India language. English serves as a link language between different multicultural States and the Centre as a language of administration and justice.
3. English as a worldwide language could only give voice to India's thought and culture abroad.

The University Education Commission (1948-49) recommended English should be studied in high schools and universities in order to gain the wide knowledge. The three language formula which was designed and recommended by CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education, 1956) made English as a third foreign language. The Indian Education

Commission (1964-66) recommended English should be the medium of instruction in all universities and special units should be set up for teaching English as a skill and not so much as literature.

The English language teacher has to develop the child's receptive and productive abilities. Under the four skills of language; Listening and Reading are Receptive skills and Speaking and Writing are Productive skills.

According to the Executive Summary of NCERT Teaching of English Position Paper; the goals of language curriculum are two-fold: attainment of basic proficiency; and developing the language into an instrument for knowledge acquisition. It is important that Input-rich communicational environments such as learner-chosen texts, textbooks, media support in print and online versions are a prerequisite for language learning. Higher-order skills can be developed once the fundamental competencies are developed. Language evaluation need not be tied to "achievement" with respect to particular syllabi, but must be reoriented to the measurement of language proficiency.

Our school system pattern has much focused on the literary aspect of language teaching and has not at all concerned in the development of four important skills of language which is evident from the National Achievement Survey 2018 for Class 10th students, 50% of them fail in English subject. Considering such a scenario it is very important that the English Language teachers relook into the system of teaching languages as dynamic subjects, especially English language as it functions as a window to the world.

There is ever-growing craze in the Indian learners to migrate to foreign countries for stay, work or pursue higher studies.   Generally English language learners opt for internationally acclaimed language proficiency tests like The International English Language Testing System (IELTS), The Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL), Occupational English Test (OET), Pearson Test of English (PTE), etc. As a result they end up taking intensive training; to get higher bands/ points.

Different Approaches of English Language Teaching: The two main approaches through which English language is taught are Structural Approach and Communicative Approach.

1. Structural Approach- This approach gives more importance to the basic sentence structure of English language. It aims at teaching the learners gradual presentation of graded structures like sentence formation, types of sentences, tenses, grammar, through repeated drills and exercises which enable the learners to form automatic language habits. This approach suits lower grade learners and is not helpful in teaching poetry, grammar and literature; as well as it neglects reading, writing and vocabulary expansion.

2. Communicative Approach- Communicative Language Teaching aims at developing four language skills. Learners interact with each other and work in groups thereby reducing hesitation and they can learn more by listening to proper English spoken. This approach lays stress on task-oriented teaching; such as learners are asked to make enquiries, describe images, analyze problems, etc. This approach suits higher grade learners and it is most

suitable approach for teaching English Language skills to immigrants. Furthermore, Communicative Approach requires specially trained and skilled teachers to teach English, and individual attention should be given to the learners.

Problems faced by English Language Learners:

1. Listening Skill- Most of the learners do not understand the British/ American native speakers accent from the audio played. They were not exposed to listening to such native speakers' fluency while they were in school days by their teacher. They are unable to grasp the words and almost get confused, and ultimately comprehend wrong information. After playing the audio multiple times in slow speed then only they are able to get the words spoken by the speaker. However; the vocabulary used by speaker remains incomprehensible by the learners.

2. Speaking Skill- Most of the learners' are not fluent in English and they lack proper vocabulary to be used in daily life situations and are unable to speak relevantly and clearly. As can be expected they hesitate and often commit mistakes in introducing themselves and others, making enquiries, giving complaints, asking instructions, group discussion, announcing and compeering.

3. Reading Skill- Reading is not appropriate following the rules of pronunciation, stress, intonation, pause, and rhythm. Learners often cannot comprehend the meaning of a paragraph and also the context of the English script. Summarizing and drawing conclusions, making inferences and reading between the lines or linking information, skimming and scanning the text, such tasks were not practised and were not given much attention by the teacher.

4. Writing Skill- English Language learners opting for International Proficiency Tests face the major hurdle of grammar, which has its roots in the basic English taught in schools. Basic grammar rules are omitted and the sentence formation is not proper with the required tense. They are often unable to produce more ideas in written English, as they lack contextually appropriate vocabulary. Writing letters to writing essays and summarizing the text is still not clear by them. Most of them have problems in note-taking, note-making and report writing. Legible Handwriting also matters with the learners.

Scaffolding English Language Instruction: It is important for the English Language trainers to Scaffold appropriate instruction for the smooth conduct of the training. Scaffolding means the trainer must give appropriate assistance to learners to learn what they couldn't by themselves. It is similar to the tutorial behavior where we coach/ guide rather than teach; and this is Contingent, Collaborative and Interactive.

1. Contingent- In this situation the learners are dependent on the influences such as stimulus-response behaviour where the skills to be learnt is the stimulus through which they are influenced and the response is their action towards it, in trying to solve it.
As per International English Language Proficiency Tests, there are many tasks to be completed in a specified time limit.

2. Collaborative- In this situation, the learners are trained to achieve their tasks collaboratively with the trainer and other peer group learners, where the tutor move forwards along with the learners' grasping ability.

3. Interactive- Interaction between the trainer and the trainees is the key feature of gliding in the training sessions. It is the imperative factor in the training process through which the trainees could clarify their doubts, rectify their mistakes and ultimately get their desired results.

Strategies for Scaffolding   English Language Instruction: There are Six Strategies which can be used for the purpose of Scaffolding the Instruction.
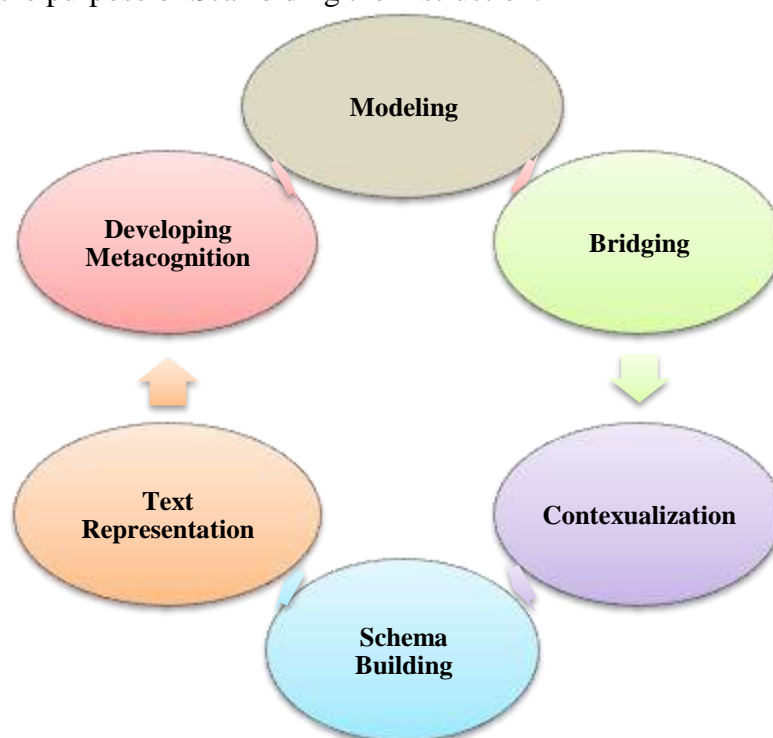

Figure 1: Six Strategies of Scaffolfing Instruction

1. Modeling- This requires learners to be in tune with the requirement of the task and to train/ model them appropriately for gaining proficiency in the said task. The trainer demonstrates the task to be fulfilled and learners follow the instructions appropriately. For example, In Speaking session, training the learners to speak clearly and contextually correct in the given situation. In Listening session, making the learners train their ears for listening and comprehending the audio from the native speaker. In Writing session, the trainer models the learner to write accordingly of what should be expected out of the task. In Reading session, the learners are trained to retrieve the required information from the given passages which are followed by number of varied objective based questions.

2. Bridging- Since learners already have the basic know-how of using English Language, they tend to construct new concepts to polish their Language Skills further through such International English Language Proficiency Tests. Learners need to merge with the new tasks

of language; although they may have learnt similar tasks in their school days. The role of the trainer here is to make the learner understand the uniqueness of the task and demonstrate a link with their previous knowledge. For example, In Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing sessions they perform all the given tasks appropriately by bridging their experience with what they have learnt earlier.

3. Contextualization- Every Language Skill explained to the learners requires a suitable Context. This can be in Verbal/ Non-Verbal form. Contextualization requires learners to experience the Academic language in sensory context by using multimedia such as Audio/ Video clips, Demonstration, Image sighting, etc. The trainer embeds the information in the multimedia source and this is then experienced by the learners using their senses. For example, In Listening session, an audio is played and the information is received carefully. The information gathered from the audio is contextualized and reciprocated. Similarly in Writing session, an image or a diagram is displayed, for which the learners have to describe such an image. In Speaking session too, trainer trains the learners to speak clearly and contextually correct. In Reading session, Contextualization of the passage plays a key role in performing the follow up varied objective based questions.

4. Schema Building- The learners are intended to make connections by joining the pieces of knowledge gained from past experiences to present experiences; Schema are clusters of meaning that are interconnected. The trainers demonstrate the relationships and interconnections between various concepts to the learners. For example, In Writing session, the learners move from general to specific concepts, covering the topic in the writing. Similarly, in Reading session, they compare, contrast, link information and arrange the sequence of events in order and so on in the given passages. In Speaking session, they talk upon diverse views and discuss issues connecting it with their personal experiences. In Listening session, the learners are trained to listen to the native speaker's conversation on any day-to-day social setting and retrieve the information required.

5. Text Representation- This requires learners to transform text from one form into another form. Learners get the task in one form and through their understanding apply it / convert it into another form. For example, In Listening, Writing and Reading sessions, they receive the information in oral/ graphic/ pictorial form and convert it into written form. In Speaking session, they represent the information in an oral form after getting received it in written/ graphic/ pictorial form in few tasks.

6. Developing Metacognition-   Learners are rigorously being assessed by the trainer during their training period; however learners also self-assess their performances. Trainers train the trainees to self-monitor the task content, context, and complete the task within the given time limit. Future performances are predicted and tasks are scheduled based on the evaluation of their present performance. Mostly, learners consciously apply the best strategies to perform these tasks. They tend to identify their strengths and overcome their weaknesses. For example, In Speaking session, they overcome their shyness and hesitation and speak loudly, clearly and in an appropriate context. In Listening session, most of the learners do not have

the habit of listening to native speaker's accent and fluency, here they overcome their shortcomings and train their ears to grasp the information. Similarly, In Reading session, they retrieve the required information correctly; and in Writing session, they represent the information following the given rules in correct grammatical structures.

Modeling To explicitly show and demonstrate	Bridging To activate prior knowledge in other to build connections	Schema Building Clusters of patterned concepts gathered from past experiences
Contextualization Surrounding new concepts with a sensory environment, thus clarifying them	Meta-cognitive Development Thinking about ones' own thinking	Text Representation Taking texts and transforming them into something else

Source:https://www.fordham.edu/download/downloads/id/4912/scaffolding_strategies_for_ells.pdf

Figure 2: Concept of Six Strategies of Scaffolfing Instruction

Metacognitive Development

Providing students with skills and vocabulary to talk about their learning.

- Self assessments
- Teach note taking and studying techniques
- Vocabulary assignments

Bridging

Building on previous knowledge and establishing a link between the students and the material.

- Think – pair – share
- Quick-writes
- Anticipatory charts

Schema- Building

Helping students see the relationships between various concepts.

- Compare and contrast
- Jigsaw learning – peer teaching
- Projects

Contextualization

Familiarizes unknown concepts through direct experience.

- Demonstrations
- Video clips
- Repetition
- Use of manipulatives
- Local opportunities

Modeling

Speaking slowly and clearly, modeling the language you want students to use, and providing samples of student work.

Text Representation

Inviting students to extend their understandings of text and apply them in a new way.

- Students create drawings, posters, or videos
- Students create new games

Source:https://www.fordham.edu/download/downloads/id/4912/scaffolding_strategies_for_ells.pdf

Figure 3: Illustration of Six Strategies of Scaffolfing Instruction

Suggestions for English Language School Teachers:

1. Teacher Sensitivity- Teacher should be sensitive and need to respond timely to the academic, social/emotional, behavioral developmental needs of all students.

2. Regard for Adolescent Perspectives- As Constructivist approach is much in-line today, it is imperative by the teachers to give value to students perspectives, opinions and ideas, thereby providing opportunities for student autonomy and leadership.

3. Positive/ Negative Climate- Positive Climate enhances the interaction between the teacher and the students, as it is an emotional connection, warmth, respect, and positive vibe spreading in the classroom, thus enhancing learning. On the other hand, Negative Climate severely shrinks the quality of instruction and learning.

4. Behavior Management- Teachers should be directed to use effective approaches and methods to encourage desirable behavior and prevent and redirect misbehavior.

5. Instructional Learning Formats- Providing clear presentation of materials via use of Educational Technology embedded within the classroom instruction, followed by content focused discussion facilitating Instructional Dialogue is crucial for today's 21st century teachers.

6. Content Understanding- Teachers must help students in deep understanding of the content, key ideas, facts, concepts, and principles so that they can practice the language without committing many errors.

7. Productivity- Teachers must manage the instructional time effectively and give students clear instructions of what they are expected to do by maximizing their learning productivity and minimizing the distractions and wastage of instructional time.

8. Student Engagement- Teachers must get satisfied by interacting with all the students and assess those showing passive engagement and active engagement towards the given instruction.

9. Analysis and Inquiry- Opportunities should be open to the students to analyze their performances and they should be engaged in higher level thinking skills via open-ended problems, tasks, and questions.

10. Quality of Feedback- Significant quality of feedback must be provided by the teacher, peer group which should greatly augment the learning of the student.

 Conclusion: Although English Language is used as an official foreign and third language in our multicultural country, it serves multitude of functions to connect where local language fails the purpose. Besides this, the explosion of knowledge in the 21st century entails the budding Indian youth to migrate to foreign countries in search of knowledge, stay or work. Under these circumstances, it is imperative by the immigrants to clear the mandatory

internationally acclaimed English Proficiency Tests. Ultimately the students' performance on these tests depends much in the roots of their former learning. Because of this; the efforts, accountability, and job role of English Language School Teachers gets elevated and more complicated to teach all the four skills of the language appropriately so that students performs on these tests without any stagnant errors in English language. Strategies used by trainers in scaffolding English Language Instruction trains the immigrants to score on such English Language Proficiency Tests. It is also observed that students who are considerably good at English, not only grasps the training well but also scores high on such tests than compared to those students who lack the language nuances.

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